

## The Pleasures of This Life

- I. pleasure: The condition of consciousness or sensation induced by the enjoyment or anticipation of what is felt or viewed as good or desirable; enjoyment, delight, gratification. The opposite of pain.
- II. Discernment is needed concerning the pleasures of this life.
- A. Pleasures of this life may be good. **DEU 14:26.**
- B. Pleasures of this life may be evil. **2TH 2:12; HEB 11:25.**
- C. The factors that determine pleasure's good or evil are:
1. The nature of the pleasure.
    - a. Is it a clear transgression of God's law? **1JO 3:4.**
    - b. Is it something that God tells us we may enjoy? **ECC 5:18-19; 1TI 6:17.**
  2. The priority the pleasure holds in one's life. **2TI 3:4.**
  3. The state of one's conscience relative to that pleasure. **1TI 1:5, 19.**
  4. The effect it has on one.
    - a. Does it dominate? **1CO 6:12; 9:25-27.**
    - b. Does it tend to exploit a sin weakness? **ROM 13:14.**
    - c. Does it hinder the effect of God's word? **LUK 8:14.**
    - d. Does it corrupt good manners? **1CO 15:33.**
    - e. Does it vex the soul? **2PE 2:8.**
- D. There are earthly pleasures which:
1. are patently evil and therefore forbidden to us (e.g. fornication).
  2. are permissible to all with good conscience (e.g. good food).
  3. may be enjoyed by some but not by others (e.g. weak conscience issues).
  4. are permissible to some only (e.g. the marriage bed).
  5. are permissible although flawed (e.g. the company of unbelievers).
  6. are permissible within limits.
- III. Scripture has some negative things to say about pleasure.
- A. The unregenerate *serve* pleasures. **TIT 3:3.**
- B. One can become *given to* (addicted to) pleasures. **ISA 47:8.**
- C. The *love of* pleasure will lead to poverty. **PRO 21:17.**
- D. We should not *live in* pleasure.
1. live: To pass life in a specified fashion, indicated by an adv. or advb. phrase having reference to the manner of regulation of conduct, esp. in a moral aspect.
  2. She that lives in pleasure is DEAD while she lives. **1TI 5:6.**
  3. Living in pleasure is the way of the oppressive rich. **JAM 5:1-5.**
- E. A characteristic of perilous times is men loving pleasure more than God. **2TI 3:1, 4.**
- F. Pleasures of this life can choke the word of God. **LUK 8:14.**
- IV. We must practice restraint with regard to the pleasures of this life.
- A. Scripture commands *temperance*. **GAL 5:23; 2PE 1:6.**
1. temperance: The practice or habit of restraining oneself in provocation, passion, desire, etc.; rational self-restraint.
  2. We are to rule over our bodies' desires, not vice-versa. **1CO 9:27.**
- B. *Revelling* is a work of the flesh. **GAL 5:19-21; 1PE 4:3-4.**
1. revelling: Riotous or disorderly merry-making or festivity.

2. riot: Wanton, loose, or wasteful living; unrestrained revelry, mirth or noise.
  3. wanton: Of persons: Undisciplined, ungoverned; not amenable to control, unmanageable, rebellious. Of actions: Lawless, violent.
- C. We are warned against *banqueting* and *surfeiting*. **1PE 4:3; LUK 21:34.**
1. banqueting: Giving of banquets (*obs.*); indulgence in luxurious entertainment, feasting, carousal.
  2. surfeit: To feed to excess or satiety; to sicken or disorder by overfeeding...
  3. satiety: The state of being glutted or satiated with food; the feeling of disgust or surfeit caused by excess of food.
- D. Consider that is the excess of otherwise lawful things that is at issue.
1. Enjoying fine food is one thing; feeding to excess is another.
  2. It is not wine consumption but the excess of wine that is wrong. **EPH 5:18.**
  3. We are to be known as *moderate* (avoiding extremes; characterized by temperance...). **PHIL 4:5.**
- E. Clearly, our entertainments need to be governed by restraint.
- V. Be wary of an entertainment that promotes, condones, or makes light of what Scripture declares to be a work of the flesh, i.e., sin. **GAL 5:19-21.**
- A. Scripture censures men not only for doing things worthy of death, but for having pleasure in them that do such things. **ROM 1:21-32.**
- B. Rather than being entertained by sin, we should abhor it and be grieved by it. **ROM 12:9; PSA 119:53, 136, 158.**
1. Beware of sinful things losing their shock value!
  2. Scripture warns against defiled consciences and being *past feeling* and thus *given over* to sin. **EPH 4:19.**
- C. We are not to walk as fools. **EPH 5:15.**
1. (**PRO 10:23**) It is as sport (*pleasant pastime; entertainment or amusement; recreation, diversion*) to a fool to do mischief: but a man of understanding hath wisdom.
  2. (**PRO 14:9**) Fools make a mock at sin: but among the righteous there is favour.
    - a. Sin is no joking matter. We are not to mockingly look upon God's despite of sin.
    - b. The cross of Jesus Christ demonstrates God's attitude toward sin.
    - c. The mocking at sin which God condemns is mocking in the sense of trivializing, condoning, or promoting sin. **PRO 30:20; JUDE 1:18 et/w 1KI 18:27.**
    - d. God Himself mocks sinners for their defiance of His standards. **PRO 1:26; PSA 2:4.**
  3. (**PRO 15:14**) The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge: but the mouth of fools feedeth on foolishness.
  4. **ECC 7:2-6.**
    - a. A wise man will consider the reality of impending death.
    - b. The rebuke of a wise man is better than the song of fools.
    - c. A fool's laughter is like the crackling of thorns under a pot. The thorns cause a lot of noise and blaze but are useless as a source of lasting fuel.
- VI. Be cautious to not set impossible standards of perfection for yourself or others in the area of pleasures such as entertainment. **ECC 7:16.**

- A. Fault can be found with ALL earthly pleasures, even in those things which God has given us to enjoy (if we become given to them, wrongly prioritize their importance, etc.).
- B. It's not just the racy, sensual, violent or blasphemous movies and TV shows that have ungodly acts, words or themes.
1. The Lucy Show soft-pedaled a woman's rebellion against her husband.
  2. The old Walt Disney movies soft-pedaled sorcery and witchcraft.
  3. The Wizard of Oz mocked God and heaven while furthering the lie that there are good witches.
- C. Suppose you avoid movies and TV shows and opt for attending a hockey game where a bloody, violent fight breaks out, as is usual.
1. God decries violence and brawling (**PSA 11:5; TIT 3:2**). Have you sinned by attending that game?
  2. Situations like this may be judged according to your intentions. Did you go to the game to enjoy a spirited competitive match or hoping for a bloody fistfight?
  3. Mind that a distinction should be made between violence perpetrated upon an unwilling victim and violence in defense of one's life, etc.
  4. There is also a difference between physical assault against an unwilling victim and mutually consensual fighting in a sport.
- D. There is virtually no part of life where exposure to some sin or sinner is not a possibility. One would have to go out of this world to completely avoid such. **1CO 5:10**.
1. A person may have to endure blasphemy or immodesty in the workplace because of unprincipled associates.
  2. One might say, "But I don't have a choice about that, whereas I do have a choice about movies."
    - a. That argument is arbitrary. One could find another workplace or start his own business.
    - b. Again, one's intentions come to bear upon these things. Did you take the job or select the movie expressly to be exposed to something sinful?
    - c. The issue of the vexing of one's soul (**2PE 2:8**) by voluntary choices in life should be remembered. Remember that Lot was a just, righteous man but a compromised, weak Christian.
- E. This is an area of Christian discernment where Biblical principles must be applied by the individual.
1. Christian liberty is not to be used as an occasion to the flesh. **GAL 5:13**.
    - a. Our liberty does not excuse us to derive pleasure from entertainment which is patently an affront to God, especially where there is no masking of the theme of the entertainment (e.g. porn, strip clubs, drag queen revues, underworld snuff films, witchcraft, occultism, revelling, etc.).
    - b. Neither should our liberty be allowed to be a stumblingblock to another person. **1CO 8:9-11**.
    - c. We should also consider whether our pleasures and entertainments are damaging or confusing our testimony to an unbelieving world. Mind, though, that hardened hearts will be unmoved our partaking or by our abstinence. **JOH 7:31-35**.
    - d. We should especially consider the impact our pleasures and entertainments have on the formation of children's values, especially young children. **MAT 18:6**.
    - e. We are to strive to be harmless. **MAT 10:16; PHIL 2:15**.

2. We are forbidden from setting up artificial standards of righteousness in the absence of clear Biblical command or precept. **COL 2:20-23**.
  - a. An ascetic establishes a pretended superiority by forbidding the enjoyment of lawful things, as did the Pharisees (**MAR 7:1-5**). Perhaps you have heard things like:
    - (1) Thou shalt not drink.
    - (2) Thou shalt not dance.
    - (3) Thou shalt not speak bluntly or speak of bodily functions.
    - (4) Thou shalt not wear colorful clothing.
    - (5) Thou shalt not watch movies.
    - (6) Thou shalt not play cards.
    - (7) Thou shalt not work on Sunday.
  - b. Pharisees love to make a "...fair shew in the flesh..." (**GAL 6:12**) to appear to men as righteous. **MAT 23:5, 28; LUK 20:46**.
    - (1) Remember that Satan has *ministers of righteousness*. **2CO 11:14-15**.
    - (2) They will make much of personal righteousness and artificial righteousness while denying Christ's satisfying righteousness.
  - c. Beware of the super-righteous whose self-appointed abstinences create such a superior picture of Christian living that it gives you unfounded guilt or breeds in you a spirit of envy. **GAL 5:21**.
3. We are to avoid judging others for things no worse than we allow in ourselves. **MAT 7:1-5**.
  - a. Imagine the Pharisee who declares the consumption of any alcohol sinful while eating himself into morbid obesity, which is condemned by rules against *gluttony* and *intemperance*. **PRO 23:21; ACT 24:25**.
  - b. Imagine the Pharisee who is too pure to say, "piss" but has no qualms about amending the Holy Bible to take that word out of it!
4. A good question to ask ourselves about the form of pleasure we choose: "Would I want to be doing this if Jesus Christ were sitting here beside me?"
5. Our partaking of a given pleasure of this life should be done with a clear conscience, as noted earlier. **1TI 1:5, 19**.
  - a. If it is something about which you are uneasy in your conscience, abstain from that until the conscience has been instructed and relieved.
  - b. Happy is the believer who doesn't condemn himself in a permissible thing. **ROM 14:22**.
  - c. Happy is the believer, who maturing in Christ, is able to make discerning judgments that maximize his liberty without imperiling his soul and testimony. **HEB 5:13-14**.

VII. God, by His grace, gives His saints lasting pleasure that can never be overindulged. **ISA 35:10; ROM 5:11**.

- A. This pleasure does not depend on worldly things. **HAB 3:17-18**.
- B. This pleasure can always be enjoyed. **PHIL 4:4**.
- C. God is our EXCEEDING joy. **PSA 43:3-4**.
- D. God's house should be preferred above our chief joy of everyday life. **PSA 137:5-6; 84:10**.
- E. Heaven is a place of endless pleasure. **PSA 16:11; REV 21:4**.